



**Steven W. Troxler**  
Commissioner

## North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

July 18, 2018

Secretary Elaine L. Chao  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
Office of the Secretary  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

**SUBJECT:** Growing Rural Economy and Agriculture through Transportation & Technology  
Enhancement or Replacement in North Carolina Project (GREATER-NC), 2018  
BUILD Grant Application

Dear Secretary Chao,

Please accept this letter of support for the 2018 BUILD Capital Grant Application submitted by the North Carolina Department of Transportation for the GREATER-NC Project. This visionary access and mobility project directly addresses the dual challenges of improving physical and digital connectivity in North Carolina's rural communities.

In most rural communities here and across the country, rural connectivity reaches these citizens last. This project will assist in building up the critical infrastructure needed, so these underserved communities can catch up to their urban and suburban neighbors.

The project will reconstruct around 70 bridges in 17 of the most rural and economically depressed counties across the state, with the potential to add broadband carrying capability across some of the structures as they are rebuilt to extend digital access in these areas.

Many of these bridges currently have weight restrictions that result in large or heavy vehicles having to detour to avoid crossing them, or limiting passage to only partially loaded trucks. For agricultural haulers, these measures result in greater costs to the producer. Removing the weight restrictions by replacing these bridges will reduce transportation costs for agricultural users and other commercial shippers. The increased access will help bring greater economic competitiveness to these rural areas, and increased broadband capability will significantly benefit farmers and other agricultural assets.

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(GREATTER-NC Grant)  
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The N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services has worked with DOT to identify candidate bridges in top-producing agriculture counties to maximize the economic impact of these bridge improvements.

The partnership developed between NCDA&CS and NCDOT has been an inclusive and ongoing dialogue in an interagency fashion. Partnering GIS functions, data sharing and co-opting state and federal dollars, this project will not only open new doors for commerce, it will provide a level of safety in rural North Carolina that is badly needed.

The construction of North Carolina's GREATTER-NC project will improve physical and digital connectivity in North Carolina's rural communities, while aligning with the missions of both NCDOT and NCDA&CS. As a collaborative partner in the development of this GREATTER-NC project grant submission, NCDA&CS is pleased to provide this letter of support. Thank you for your consideration of this application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Steven W. Troxler", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Steven W. Troxler  
Commissioner